

Leader Coaching Guide



*NCO Leadership Center of Excellence
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For further information or to submit comments on this guide, contact the NCOLCoE-NCOPDD



Coaching

The purpose of this guide is to support coaching to Army leaders. Developing others is a requirement of all leaders. When coaching follows individual assessments, the desired result links feedback interpretation with developmental planning. The role of coaches involves helping leaders understand and appreciate their current level of ability and potential and guide the leader to choose ways to get better. When coaching is part of a program of individual assessments, coaches help explain the assessment results, guide the identification of strengths and developmental needs, provide insight or suggestions on how to build on knowledge and skill, and guide a leader through the creation of an action plan or development plan. Coaches help leaders gain insight that can have an immediate effect on how the leader can improve their choices and behaviors. Applying the guidelines in this document will enhance and expand the leader development process that already occurs.

Coaching is structured one-on-one relationship focused on facilitating learning and improving performance to achieve goals and create desired results. As a coach, you will-

- **Partner with a leader**-----you both contribute to the process, but ***the leader owns it.***
- **Focus on the leader’s thinking process**—focus on the leader’s needs and interests but prepare to direct attention to potential blind spots or strengths to leverage or build upon.
- **Demonstrate curiosity and genuine interest**—interest in what is possible for the leader’s development.

TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE THE ART OF COACHING

Coach Presence	Coaching presence is the ability to be here and in the moment with the leader, and to alter an approach based on what comes up in the interaction. Staying present with the conversation will both build buy-in, so the leader is more willing to do the hard work and keep the focus of the conversation on what is most relevant to the leader’s development in that moment. Presence is one of the most important factors for coaching success.
Get out of the way	Getting out of the way means letting go of personal agendas and assumptions and letting the coaching process be about the leader and their needs, goals, and way learning. Remember, coaches should be aware of their preconceived notions or sentiments of the situation and prevent these from getting in the way of their ability to correctly interpret the situation.
Powerful Questioning for buy-in and Connection	Asking open-ended questions, combined with active listening, demonstrates interest, concern, and shows the leader you are following their situation. A skillfully delivered question can drive greater learning and self-awareness. Open-ended questions can be powerful and have a lasting impact starting with the 5Ws: Who, What, When, Where, and Why.
Active Listening	Through active listening, coaches- build a connection and learn what the leader needs, what motivates them, and what they care about. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 – Internal Listening: Listening and relate to information-based on your own experience. Used to build rapport. • Level 2 – focused listening: Listen for what the information means to the leader. Used to build a strong connection by demonstrating interest in the leader. • Level 3 – global listening: Listening for what is not being said (e.g., tone, emotions). Creates a deeper understanding of what is going on for the leader, what they care about etc.

Individual Development Plan

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) process defines actionable and measurable development objectives and identifies specific development activities to build upon. IDP development involves a collaborative discussion between the leader and the coach that defines a leader’s development objectives and identifies the actions and activities that help him or her to meet these objectives. The IDP process should encourage leaders to maximize their potential and foster leaders’ ownership of professional and career development.

The role of the coach in this process is to guide a leader through the creation of an IDP, but to do so without “telling the leader what to do.” Effective coaches are able to do this by knowing the right questions to ask and raising them at the right time.

The IDP Form

The IDP form is a document designed to define development goals, objectives, and outcomes, clarify the leader’s development opportunity, and identify strengths to build upon.

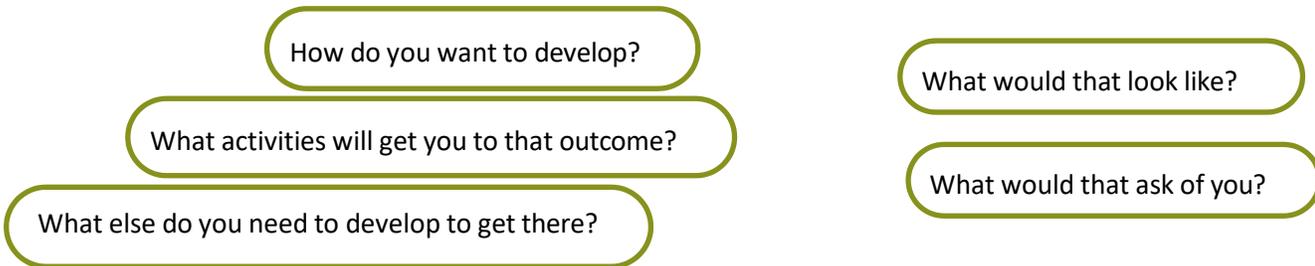
Individual Development Plan (IDP)		
(1) Leader's Name:		
(2) Short-Term Goals (Personal/Professional, 0-1 Year):	(3) Long-Term Goals (Personal/Professional: 1-4 Years):	
(4) Self-Assessment: Physical Fitness (ACFT ____/APFT ____): Self-Assessed Strengths: Self-Assessed Developmental Needs:	(5) Cognitive: Critical Thinking: Communications (Reading; Writing: Verbal) Technical & Tactical Knowledge (Warfighting):	(6) Leadership: Competencies: Self-Awareness
(7) Immediate Actions (Next 90 Days):		

WHEN REVIEWING OR ANALYZING ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

- What catches your attention in the summary data?
- What are the leader’s strengths?
- What are some developmental areas the leader may need to work on?
- Are there any areas that may indicate a perception gap between the leader’s self-view and what the feedback indicates?

The IDP Process

The IDP process is iterative and is not considered a fill-in the blank exercise. During an IDP session, the coach raises questions to stimulate critical thought and help the leader arrive at appropriate developmental areas and a plan for action. The most important aspect of the IDP process, from a coaching standpoint, is to ensure that what is recorded on an IDP form be in the leader's own words and accurately reflect what is realistic and actionable. The most important contribution a coach can make in the IDP process is to help see the leader is committed to development. The coach can ask questions such as:



Note: questions represent the process in an overly simplistic fashion. A coach should use a series of engaging questions to guide the leader through each phase of IDP planning. Aside from using questions to guide the leader through the IDP process, a coach should also be knowledgeable about development tools and resources for improvement to recommend or suggest to the leader.

The structure of an IDP session should include the following activities:

- **Target the Development:** Define professional areas and related competencies on which to focus. Start at a macro level before creating specific objectives.
- **Define the Desired Outcome:** Define accomplishments that signal attainment of some developmental gain.
- Guide the leader in identifying specific behaviors and conditions in the form of objective statements.
- Help the leader identify between three and five objectives that address the greatest developmental needs.
- **Identify Activities.** Identify planned developmental activities linked to objectives.
- Activities should promote development and learning. Focus on aligning learning opportunities with the leader's preferred learning style.
- With the leader, develop or search for varied, practical, and positive development activities. The *Leader Developmental Improvement Guide* is a useful resource for determining activities.
- **Specify Progress** indicators.
- Consider how the leader's progress will be evaluated.
- Consider how the leader will know the desired outcomes have been achieved.
- **Document the timeframe** or status for achieving the objectives.

Target Development

During IDP planning, a coach should support the leader in developing objectives that are as clear and concrete as possible to enable real action. The leader should leave the session knowing exactly what they are reaching for and what is required to get there.

Define Outcomes

A development objective is a statement defining what the leader wants to accomplish during the course of the coaching engagement. A strong development objective:

- Includes a behavior, which is the verb, a condition, which is the context and circumstances, and a standard, which is the measurement of achievement.
- Starts with an action verb defining what the leader knows, will do, or hopes to achieve.
- Offers a broad description of the setting and circumstances under which the behavior will be performed.
- Gives a measure of success, which may be in terms of a timeframe, level of quality, or rating.

Below is a list of suggested discussion questions that you as a coach could ask during the IDP process. Remember the six criteria that will help you to ask the right questions:

ASK

As a coach, use the suggested list of discussion questions during the IDP process.

- What strength(s) from your assessments do you want to put in your IDP?
- What developmental need(s) from your assessment do you want to put in your IDP?
- What might be a barrier preventing you from developing a different behavior?
- What could you do to overcome this barrier to development?
- May I offer you some thoughts on a couple of ideas for developmental activities, outcomes, and measurements to consider for your IDP?
- What milestones are achievable?
- How will you measure success?
- What will enable your attainment of these goals?
- How will you get feedback on how well you are doing?
- What support will you need to accomplish your development objective?

Specify Progress

The institutional environment in which instructor and faculty coaching occurs requires special considerations for the IDP process, specifically in selecting or creating developmental activities.

Depending on the length of the course, a coach should guide a leader to discern and choose developmental activities that appropriately fit the environment, both near term and long term.

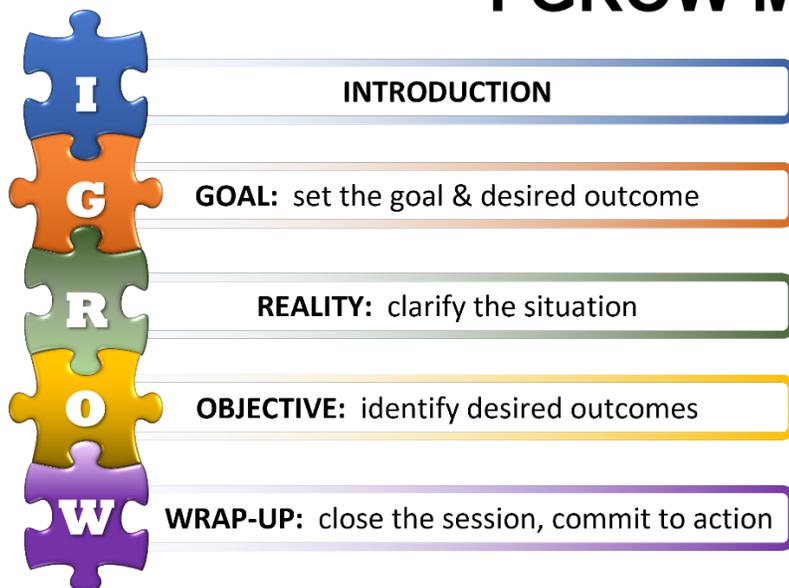
- Activities for the **near term** should be ones that may readily be put into action while the leader is in the institutional environment. Examples might include activities that involve interacting with peers (classmates), leading a discussion, giving a presentation, or self-study on a topic.

- Activities for the **long term** that require operational or unit-based resources, more appropriately acted on in the operational domain, should also be created. The leader should plan to act on these activities upon return to a unit or organization. Activities such as leading subordinates on a mission, building a skill while on-the-job, and demonstrating competencies during real-life situations are examples of these activities.

The coaching model offers a flexible structure for the coaching conversation. This model creates a predictable system within which coach and leader work. It is not meant to be prescriptive or rigid rather guiding and adaptable.

The I-GROW model aligns with the Coaching Resource card and although the I-introduction step encompasses 3 steps on the resource card, it is very quick and becomes shorter as the Coaching relationship develops.

I-GROW Model



STANDARDIZED COACHING SEQUENCE		
Section	Topics Covered or Questions Asked	Suggested Duration
1. Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach introduces himself or herself and asks the leader to share their Army background. • Coach shares their background with the leader. This should be brief and focused on experiences that relate to the leader's situation. • Keep introductions very brief if you and the leader are already familiar with one another. 	5 minutes
2. Discuss Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "This information is not used for official or unofficial evaluations." • "Interpretation of these data and any outcomes are not tied to scores, ratings, or evaluations for this course." • "No information will be given to your chain of command or anyone else." • "You can discuss anything in this session and it will be kept confidential." 	2 minutes
3. Discuss the Rules of the Coaching Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Be honest and open with yourself and me." • "We will look at your strengths, but more importantly, we will look at your developmental needs. Be willing to accept criticism and remain open and positive." • "I will assist you in identifying and creating a plan to address your areas of developmental need. We will discuss reasons why there may be certain feedback or why certain perceptions may exist." • "I will assist you in creating your Individual Development Plan (IDP) as a part of this coaching session." 	2 minutes
4. Initial Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What do you expect to get out of this coaching session?" • "Can I suggest a way ahead for how we use our time during this session?" 	1 minute
5. Assist Leader in Understanding Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review assessment purpose and how it fits with the leader's goals or current position. • Interpret and reflect on results. Explore how they aligned with the leader's understanding of their capabilities. • Interpret high and low results at the detailed behavior or attribute level (for example, five highest and five lowest). 	20-25 minutes
6. Assist Leader in Creating an Individual Development Plan (IDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the desired focus and outcome(s). • Identify planned developmental activities linked to focus areas and objectives. • Specify progress indicators. • Document the timeframe or status for achieving the objective(s). 	10-15 minutes
7. Coaching Session Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and reinforce identified strengths. • Review developmental needs the leader selected to focus on. • Ask the leader if they are committed to improving and using the IDP. • Thank the leader for their time and provide final words of encouragement and motivation. 	5 minutes

Standardized Coaching Session Sequence

This is a general framework for a coaching session that you may use as a job aid while coaching. This sequence applies to both face-to-face and virtual coaching sessions, though minor modifications may be necessary in unique circumstances. While this sequence depicts coaching sessions as a linear progression, the objective of coaching **is not** to 'check the box' at each step to arrive at an outcome. Recall that coaching is as much a way of being with a leader as it is facilitating understanding and providing guidance.

Remember:

- The *presence* of the coach in each step of the process should invite the coached leader to reach beyond what they know to what is possible.
- Coaching involves *powerful questioning* to draw information out of a leader, helping him/her phrase conclusions and solutions in their own words.
- Ownership of the coaching process and the outcomes should remain with the coached leader.,
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Section	Topics Covered or Questions Asked	Suggested Duration
1.Focus Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the specific purpose of the coaching session, identify short- and long-term goals. Discuss expectations of the coaching session (make a note and revisit at the end). The coach communicates to the leader the developmental tasks for the coaching session, incorporate feedback from the SAID-I, SA-IA, and LDR180 assessments. 	5 minutes
2.Clarity the Leader's Self-Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coach and leader work together to define both strengths and developmental needs. Both the coach and the leader communicate perceived strengths, developmental needs, and focus areas to improve performance. Both the coach and the leader agree on areas of developmental needs. Use SAID-I, SA-IA, and LDR180 assessment feedback to inform specific needs. 	10 minutes
3.Uncover Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coach facilitates self-awareness of the leader's potential and developmental needs by guiding the discussion with open-ended questions. The coach actively listens to how the leader perceives potential. The aim is to encourage the free flow of ideas. The coach also assesses the leader's readiness to change and incorporates this into the session. Refer to feedback from SAID-I, SA-IA, and LDR 180 assessments as necessary. 	15 minutes
4.Eliminate Developmental Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coach identifies developmental needs with the leader and areas that may hinder self-development. The coach helps the leader determine how to overcome barriers to development and implement an effective plan to improve performance. The coach helps identify potential sources of support for implementing an action plan. 	15 minutes
5.Develop Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coach and the leader create an Individual Development Plan (IDP) defining actions that can improve performance/personal growth within a given period. The coach uses the Project Athena resources to communicate those self-directed activities the individual can accomplish to improve performance in a particular competency. 	30 minutes
6.Closing Session/ Follow-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit expectations to close the session, were expectations met? If not, address areas of concern. Coaches should conduct periodic follow-ups as part of a larger transition. Both coach and leader should provide feedback concerning the effectiveness of the assessment, the usefulness of the information received, and progress made. Coaches provide frequent informal feedback and timely, proactive, <u>formal counseling</u> to regularly inspire and improve subordinates. 	Ongoing

As a coach, use the suggested list of discussion questions during the IDP process.

What strength(s) from your assessments do you want to put in your IDP?

What developmental need(s) from your assessment do you want to put in your IDP?

What might be a barrier preventing you from developing a different behavior?

What could you do to overcome this barrier to development?

May I offer you some thoughts on a couple of ideas for developmental activities, outcomes, and measurements to consider for your IDP?

What milestones are achievable?

How will you measure success?

RESOURCES

NCOWORLDWIDE Website



NCOLCoE-NCOPDD



Center for the Army Profession and Leadership



Project Athena Resources

